

REMARKS

Claims 26 through 37, 39 through 41, 43 through 73 and 76 are pending in the application. Claims 1 through 25, 42 and 74 were previously canceled. Claims 38, 75, 77 and 78 are canceled by the present amendment.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has allowed claims 52 through 73 and 76.

Applicants also note that the Examiner indicates that claims 29, 30, 34 through 36, 38 through 40 and 49 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. However, rather than rewrite these several claims in independent form, Applicants have opted to rewrite an independent claim, namely claim 26, to include the allowable recital previously presented in claim 38, cancel claim 38, and amend claims 29, 30, 34, 39 and 40 to depend from allowed claim 76. Each of claims 35, 36 and 49, through an intervening claim, now also depend from allowed claim 76.

In the Office Action, claims 26 – 28, 31 – 33, 37, 41, 43 – 48, 50, 51, 75, 77 and 78 are rejected. Claims 75, 77 and 78 are canceled, thus obviating the rejection thereof. Of the remaining rejected claims, one is independent, namely claim 26. As mentioned above, Applicants rewrote claim 26 to include an allowable recital that was previously presented in claim 38. Additionally, Applicants amended several of the other rejected claims so that they now depend on allowed claim 76. As a result, claims 27, 28, 31 – 33, 37, 41, 43 – 48, 50 and 51 now depend on allowed claim 76, and therefore, are now in condition for allowance.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 26 – 28, 31 – 33, 37, 41, 43 – 48, 50, 51, 75, 77 and 78.

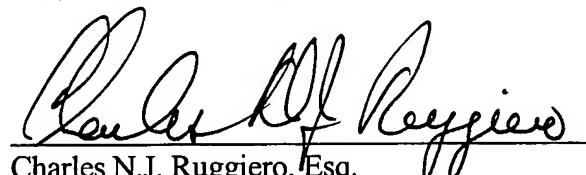
As mentioned above, Applicants rewrote claim 26 to include a relevant recital that was previously presented in claim 38. Applicants amended claims 27 through 34, 37, 39

through 41, and 43 to depend from allowed claim 76 rather than from claim 26. To accommodate this change in dependency, Applicants also amended claims 28 through 31, 37, 45 and 48 to introduce terms that were previously presented in claim 26, but are now need in claims 28 through 31, 37, 45 and 48 to provide an antecedent basis for existing terms. None of the amendments is intended to narrow the scope of any term of any of the claims, and so, the doctrine of equivalents should be available for all of the terms of all of the claims.

Since this amendment neither raises new issues nor requires further consideration, entry is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner deems that the present amendment does not place the application in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request that it be entered for the purpose of appeal.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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